

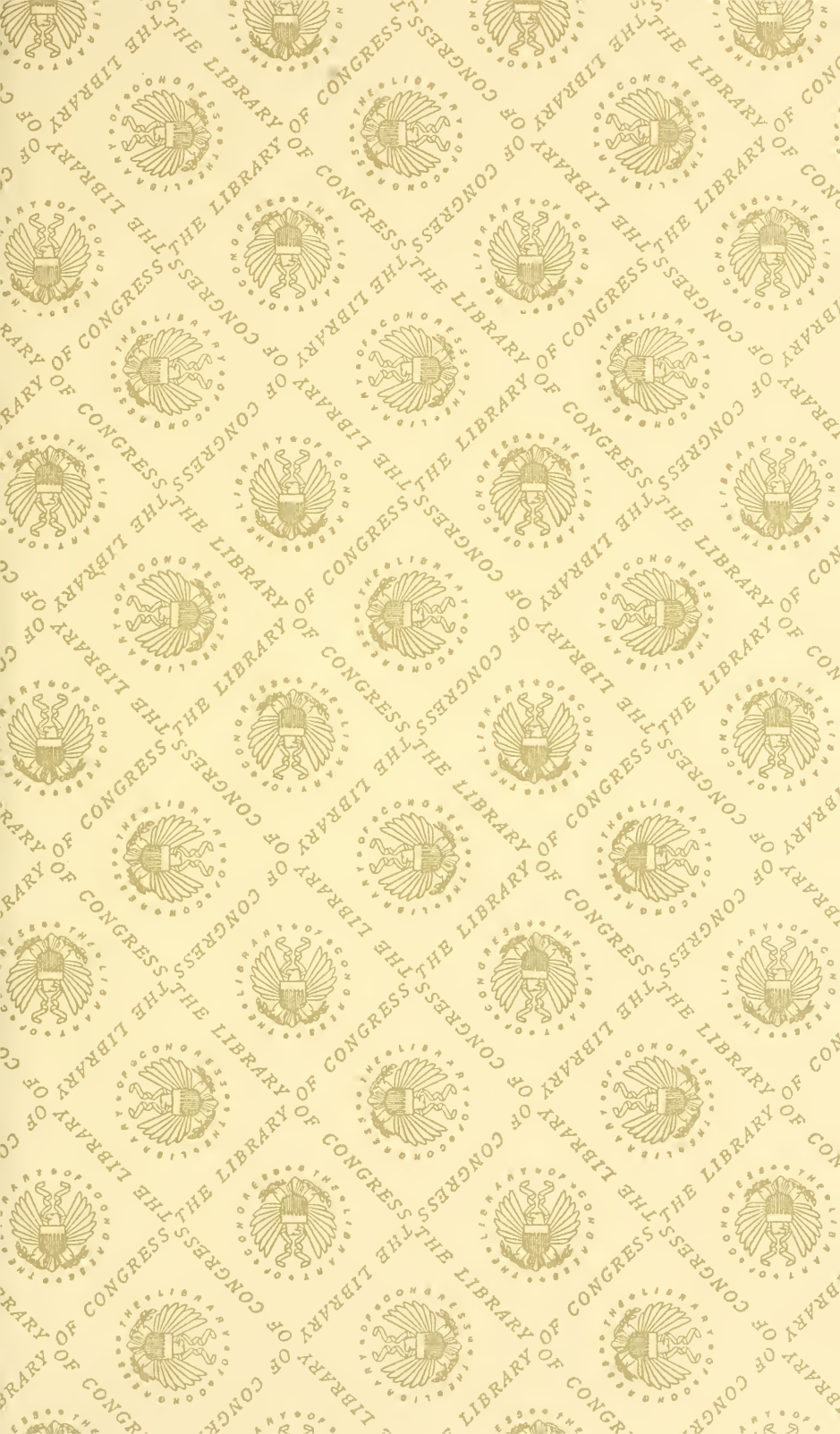
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[Separate No. 153]

House Miscellaneous Papers in the Library  
of Congress

By Asa Currier Tilton, Ph. D.

[From the Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for  
1912, pages 227-245]

Madison  
Published for the Society  
1913

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# House Miscellaneous Papers

## House Miscellaneous Papers in the Library of Congress

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By Asa Currier Tilton

The report of the Librarian of Congress for 1910 records the acquisition of a selection from miscellaneous papers of the House of Representatives of the United States under a resolution of March 5, 1910.<sup>1</sup> These papers number some five hundred items, chiefly bundles of ordinary file form and size. Their miscellaneous character and the inaccessibility of the mass of the papers which are still in the possession of the House, give interest to a description of this selection in the Library of Congress, which is typical of the value of those still in the capitol and, to some degree at least, of their character and subject matter. They were arranged and listed by the writer of these notes, while special assistant in the Manuscripts Division; his comments are based, therefore, on an actual handling and examination of all the papers.<sup>2</sup> The field covered by them is as wide and varied as that of the activities of the House and the federal government, and even wider. No attempt at a classified description of them will here be made, for these notes are intended merely to suggest their scope, value, and most striking groups.

The question of first interest and consequence concerning any such body of manuscripts is, it need hardly be said, as to the

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase "selected House papers", in these notes invariably refers to this collection in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. The writer desires cordially to acknowledge the assistance which he received in the preparation of these notes from Mr. Gaillard Hunt, the chief of that division.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. J. C. Fitzpatrick began this work, but unfortunately was prevented by other duties from carrying it far.



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amount of unprinted material which it contains. It must at once be admitted that in the case of the selected House papers no satisfactory and definite answer to this question can be given. Until those in the Capitol shall be arranged and listed, we must be content with impressions. It would be venturesome to assume that this amount varies chronologically; but there seem to be more unprinted papers of noticeable interest in earlier than in later years. Illustrations appear below, of the fact that the official House date is no criterion of the date of historical interest of a document and its accompanying papers.

State papers and other important documents of the president, departments, and committees are, of course, in print. This is, also, usually but not invariably the case when the contents are of less moment. All printed copies of bills must be credited with manuscript value. Those enacted are in print as laws; but laws are not bills when we are tracing the progress of legislation, whether of itself or as the expression of a great national movement, like that on the tariff in 1828 or on Kansas-Nebraska in 1854. Printed bills and amendments are of manuscript rarity, especially in earlier years.

No one at all conversant with public documents would be so rash as to say that the contents of a House manuscript of a certain Congress were not printed, on the basis of an examination of the volumes of House documents and reports for that Congress alone. This increases the difficulty of estimating the proportion of printed and manuscript material in these papers.

The writer may say that his work on the selected House papers was done after several years' experience in the care and use of public documents, and that every evidence and impression during the progress of the work indicated the existence in the collection of more unprinted material than he had anticipated from his previous acquaintance with the printed documents of the United States.

Of next consequence to the proportion of unprinted material, is the question whether the manuscripts among the selected House papers which are in print have an appreciated value due to inaccuracies in printing. If so, they are of manuscript rank. The tests which were made show quite clearly that they do have such an appreciated value. It should be remarked, however, that as a rule the appreciation will be effective only in investi-



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gations where textual accuracy is essential and vital. The following collations illustrate these statements.

When the death of Washington was announced, Congress passed a resolution, December 23, 1799, directing the president to extend to Mrs. Washington the sympathy and condolence of the government and the nation, and to ask her to permit his burial in the Capitol. She replied in an autograph letter, dated at Mt. Vernon, December 31. This is printed in the *House Journal* and in the *Annals* for January 8, 1800. The *Journal* (reprint) changes "the great example" to "that great example"; the *Annals* print the text of the letter correctly, but omit the date. As usual in the collations made for these notes, the printed texts differ from the manuscript in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. These variations have not in any case been recorded; they are rarely of consequence, and often the condition of the copy compelled the printer to follow his own rules and judgment.

The requirement in the admission of a new State that its constitution be approved by federal authority, has brought to the House files certified copies in manuscript or print of proposed constitutions. Examples among the selected House papers are:

A manuscript copy of the Missouri constitution of 1820, and printed copies of the Indiana constitution of 1816 and the Illinois constitution of 1818. Collations in the Illinois constitution show that the text printed in the House documents is in the main accurate: but in one instance "his" is printed for "the", and some of the variations in punctuation, etc., which seem inexcusable when following the official printed copy, come dangerously near altering the meaning of some sentences.

In 1814 Gen. Alexander Smith sent to the speaker of the House a letter and accompanying papers relating to his conduct of operations on the Niagara frontier in 1812-13; they are printed in *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, vol. 1, pp. 490 ff. Collations showed no printer's errors of consequence, but some changes of words were noted.

In 1790 the War Department sent to the House a document containing the returns of troops furnished by the several States during the Revolutionary War. It is printed *Ibid*, pp. 14 ff.

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In the returns for 1778 the total for New York is given both in the manuscript and printed text as 2,190, but addition of the items makes the total 2,194. For New Jersey the total is given correctly in the manuscript as 1,586, but in the printed text as 1,580. A similar misprint appears in the Virginia returns. In the returns for 1779 the grand total is given both in the manuscript and printed text as 41,584; addition of the items gives 45,184. Other tests did not disclose errors, but complete collation was not made. The burden of error seems, in this instance, to rest on the manuscript rather than the printed text.

On Jan. 18, 1837, the House ordered that papers presented to it, which related in any way to slavery, should lie on the table without printing, reference, or other action. This is the so-called "gag rule", against which John Quincy Adams waged his famous fight for the right of petition. On February 6 Mr. Adams rose and stated that he held a paper which purported to be from slaves and asked the chair to inform him whether it came under the order of January 18. A bitter contest ensued, in which the proceedings and debates centered on an attempt to censure Mr. Adams. The manuscripts of the resolutions of censure moved on February 6 and 7 are among the selected House papers. At this time both the *Congressional Debates* and the *Congressional Globe* were being printed, as well as the *Journal*. The importance of the incident, the character of the proceedings, and the existence of three official printed texts combine to furnish an unusual opportunity for collation.

The first resolutions were moved by Mr. Thompson of South Carolina, and were followed by a substitute amendment, moved by Mr. Haynes. No variations of importance between the manuscript and the printed texts were found in either. In the modification moved by Mr. Lewis, however, the manuscript reads, "petition from slaves." The *Journal* and *Debates* print correctly, but the *Globe* has "of slaves." The manuscript also reads, "directly incites the slave population to insurrection"; this is correctly printed in the *Journal* and *Globe*, but the *Debates* have "invites."

Mr. Thompson's final modification on the 6th shows similar discrepancies. In resolution 2 the manuscript reads, "leaving the House under that impression," which the *Journal* prints correctly; but the *Globe* has "such impression", and the *De-*

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*bates* have "showing the House". In resolution 3 the manuscript has either "Hon." or "said" before Mr. Adams's name; one word has been written over the other and it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell which is final. The *Journal* prints "said", the *Globe* "Hon.", and the *Debates* "honorable". On February 7 Mr. Dromgoole suggested a modification; here manuscript and texts agree.

With Mr. Bynum's amendment the case is quite different. In resolution 1 the manuscript reads:

"That an attempt to present any petition or memorial to this house from any slave or slaves negro or free negro from any part of this union is a contempt of this house & calculated to embroil it in of [sic], strife & confusion incompatible with the dignity of the body, & any member guilty of the same, justly subjects himself to the strictest censure of the house."

All printed texts omit the superfluous "of." The *Journal* prints the resolution correctly except that it has "or any member"; the *Globe* and *Debates* print as follows:

"That an attempt to present any petition or memorial from any slave or slaves, or free negro, from any part of the Union, is a contempt of the House, and calculated to embroil it in a strife and confusion incompatible with the dignity of the body; and that any member guilty of the same, justly subjects himself to the censure of the House."

In resolution 2 the manuscript reads:

"Resolved Farther that a committee of [sic] be appointed to enquire into the fact whether such attempt has or has not been committed by any member of this house & report the same as soon as practicable."

All printed texts omit the superfluous "of"—which, it may be added, comes at the end of a line and suggests an intention of fixing the number of members of the committee. The *Journal* changes "farther" to "further", but otherwise follows the manuscript. The *Globe* and *Debates* print:

"Resolved, that a committee be appointed to inquire into the fact whether any such attempt has been made by any member of this House and report the same to the House as soon as practicable."

This amendment by Mr. Bynum was subjected to an amendment introduced by Mr. Patton. In this, again, collation re-

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veals decided variations in the printed texts. In resolution 1 the manuscript had the words, "Resolved, That"; but they were crossed out after being written, as they survive from the resolutions under amendment. The *Journal* properly omits them, but they are retained by the *Globe* and *Debates*, which, moreover, omit "and" after "Union."

In resolution 2 the manuscript reads:

"Resolved that any member who shall hereafter present any such petition to this House ought to be considered as regardless of the feelings of the house, the rights of the south, and an enemy to the Union."

The *Globe* and *Debates* print "every member", and "this" before House (second occurrence); otherwise they follow the manuscript accurately. The *Journal* has "the" before House (first occurrence); and it omits "of the house, the rights", so as to make the resolution read, "feelings of the south and an enemy to the Union."

In the resolution 3 the manuscript reads "disclaimed all design of doing anything disrespectful to the House." The *Journal* prints "designs", and the *Globe* and *Debates* "a design". The manuscript further reads, "as to the petition purporting to be from slaves". The *Journal* and *Debates* print correctly; but the *Globe* has, "as to the right of petition purporting to be from slaves." Finally, the manuscript reads, "all further proceedings in regard to his conduct now cease." The *Journal* prints this correctly; but the *Globe* and *Debates* have, "as to his conduct."

The censure was finally disposed of on the 9th by an adverse vote on resolutions moved by Mr. Bynum in modification of his former resolutions. No manuscript of these is present among the selected House papers, hence it is impossible to test the accuracy of the printed texts. If we assume their correctness, a comparison with the printed texts of the preceding resolutions above, might give a wholly false notion concerning the modification of his earlier resolutions.

These resolutions are the hills and forts around which was waged a fierce parliamentary battle. Keen minds were contending over the words and phrases of an enactment of parliamentary law. Historical treatment of such an incident demands accuracy of source texts, just as scientific historical de-

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scription of a military battle or campaign demands accurate topographical maps as a basis for its narrative and conclusions. Yet no one of the official printed texts of the censure resolutions approaches accuracy, and the *Journal*, supposedly the authoritative and final version, contains the most serious of all the printer's errors. In this case the manuscripts have an appreciated value, which we are prone to deny to those about 1837 and admit only in those of a thousand years or so earlier.<sup>3</sup>

Record of one more collation will be given, and from a document thirty years younger than those just considered. On July 20, 1867, President Johnson sent a message to the House in response to a resolution of July 8 which asked whether the newspaper accounts of a cabinet meeting, at which an interpretation of the reconstruction acts was decided on, were authoritative and complete. The manuscript of the message was collated with the printed texts in the *Journal*, *Globe*, *House Executive Document no. 34* (40th Cong., 1 sess.), and *Richardson's Messages and Papers*. The accompanying minutes and orders were not collated.

The message first relates the resolution in summary and indirect quotation, and the manuscript properly uses no quotation marks. Document no. 34 correctly omits them; but **they** are inserted in the other printed texts. The manuscript reads "a publication"; Document no. 34 agrees, but the other texts substitute "the". The manuscript reads "21st day of June last." Document no. 34 agrees; but the other texts omit "day." The manuscript reads "the President and the Cabinet." Document no. 34 and the *Globe* print correctly; but the *Journal* and Richardson omit "the" before "Cabinet". The manuscript quotes the resolution—correctly, according to the *Journal* and *Globe* of July 8—thus, "or with his knowledge or assent." Document no. 34 agrees; but the other texts have, "and consent." The manuscript reads, "opinion of the heads of the several Executive Departments." Document no. 34 prints correctly; but the other texts have "opinions." The

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<sup>3</sup> Some differences between manuscript and text may, naturally, be due to changes made in proof; but such variations would be quite different from those shown in these collations.



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manuscript reads, "from those acts." Document no. 34 agrees; but the other texts print "these."

None of the variations listed are, perhaps, of consequence; yet no careful editor of historical documents would be willing to allow such errors on his pages. It will be noted that Document no. 34 gives the most accurate text of Johnson's message. Throughout the selected House papers there is abundant evidence of the use of original manuscripts as printer's copy for the reports and documents of Congress. Other texts, as in the *Journal*, *Globe*, etc., would seem to be taken from the printed report or document with corresponding increase in liability of error.

Several other messages from President Johnson were collated with Richardson's text and showed more accurate printing than that of the message of July 20, 1867. Lack of time prevented a collation of the records of the Johnson impeachment trial among the selected House papers—a promising field for such an investigation.

Manuscripts which have been printed may also have an appreciated value because they are drafts or copies in which corrections and changes have been made. Such detail may sometimes be of consequence in tracing the development of a report or bill, and occasionally, perhaps, in showing the variations and development of opinion and feeling on measures and policies, both in Congress and the country.

The manuscripts of the Adams censure resolutions furnish some illustrations. In Mr. Lewis's modification the manuscript shows that, "directly incites to insurrection amongst the slave population" was first written and then changed to, "directly incites the slave population to insurrection." This and similar revisions show the clarification of the ideas of the supporters of the censure into clear, exact, and forceful expression.

In 1832 the inhabitants of Michigan Territory residing west of Lake Michigan, the later Wisconsin, sent a petition to Congress on various matters of local importance. One concerned a separate territorial government for the region. In setting forth reasons for this request, the estimated population is stated to be seven thousand. The manuscript, however, shows that "seven" is written over an erasure in a hand different from that of the



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rest of the text. Examination also discloses the fact that the word erased began with "f" which fixes it at either "four" or "five"—the space is not sufficient to allow "fifteen." Without attempting to find the significance of the change in this particular case it may safely be said that all such connotations relating to a fluctuating frontier population are welcome historical acquisitions. The petition does not appear to have been printed. If it were, the printed text would undoubtedly give the population as a flat seven thousand without any hint of the limitation which the erasure in the manuscript places on its correctness.

On December 31, 1834, proceedings in memory of Lafayette were held by Congress, the chief feature of which was an oration by Mr. Adams. The copy of this oration among the selected House papers is an autograph draft which contains corrections, changes and omissions. Such a manuscript would be of interest, perhaps even of considerable value, to an editor or biographer.

Under date of March 4, 1834, a report was made by the committee on ways and means on the removal of the public deposits. The manuscript indicates careful editing of this, the final draft. The editing is confined to the selection of words; but the changes uniformly tend to make the language of the report more vigorous and direct. It is conceivable that even such slight revision might be important evidence in a critical investigation concerning an important report—say of its authorship.

From these notes on the general characteristics and value of the selected House papers, we will now turn to a somewhat more specific treatment of the subject matter of two classes that yield the largest proportion of new material—petitions and claims. Not only have more of the documents in these classes remained unprinted, but those in print have been published only in part or in summaries. Consequently they contain material that may be new for two reasons: because in hitherto inaccessible manuscripts, or because it has been overlooked on account of the fragmentary manner in which it has been printed.

Judging from the selected House papers, the House files are flooded with petitions. They have flowed in a steady stream—

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individual petitions, petitions with printed text signed and forwarded by hundreds, and memorials of societies and state legislatures. Many have been printed, many not; often only a summary is printed in a report on a petition or group of petitions. When printed verbatim, the signatures are almost always, if not always, omitted; only in exceptional cases, however, do the names seem to have any historical value. Whether printed or unprinted, the petitions furnish a superabundance of material for tracing the growth and fluctuation of public opinion on all the great questions and movements of our history. To the student of social and economic history, especially when viewed from a local history standpoint, they will often furnish facts and put one in touch with local public feeling. This holds true in spite of all the adverse criticism which obviously can be made against them as historical sources.

One subject on which there is a very large number of petitions, as every student of American history would surmise, is that of slavery. In the following illustrations of this class of petitions, geographical distribution as well as range of subject matter has determined the selection:

Under date of December 30, 1799, a petition was signed, usually by mark, by seventy free negroes of Philadelphia. It can scarcely have value as an expression of opinion, but its declarations concerning kidnapping and the slave trade must be given some credence unless we assume that local anti-slavery leaders, who almost certainly drew it up, would publish concrete statements that could not be backed by any evidence whatsoever. From the years 1800-01 may be noted petitions from slaveholders of Maryland and Delaware, complaining of the enticing away of slaves and of the inadequacy of the fugitive slave law; they state alleged facts as well as express opinion and feeling. Some are re-enforced by personal letters, a procedure by no means exceptional; such letters are even less likely to be printed, than the petitions themselves. From 1806 we have a memorial of the American convention for promoting the abolition of slavery, which is accompanied by its printed proceedings for 1805. This is representative of a distinct class of petitions, those of propagandists with local and national organization. The society just mentioned was composed of Quakers, a fact suggesting a still further value of such petitions—

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for the study of religious groups and their attitude and activity in public and economic affairs. A South Carolina memorial of December 29, 1807, asked exemption from the penalties of the law prohibiting the slave trade for certain vessels that had unexpectedly been delayed so that they could not reach port before the following New Year's day, when the law would go into effect. Questions culminating in the Missouri Compromise of 1820 brought forth a multitude of petitions. From that time on, the stream bends and turns with every change in the great contest. Only the memorials from bodies organized for a definite and specific purpose hold to a steady course, and even that is altered as new conditions arise.

A bundle of petitions of the year 1827 well illustrates the usual geographical distribution of a group. It contains petitions from the American Colonization Society and from the states of Vermont, New York, Ohio, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Some in this bundle relate to slavery in the District of Columbia, a favorite theme for a number of years, but most refer to manumission and African colonization. Some petitions favoring colonization, as one from Tennessee in 1832, advocate a colony in the West along the lines of the Indian Territory. Many petitions relating to slavery, from 1837 and succeeding years, bear endorsements in the hand of Mr. Adams and give ample evidence of the tireless persistence of his fight against the order of the House concerning such papers. The order itself furnished occasion for countless memorials.

In the midst of the innumerable slavery petitions of the thirties we find no inconsiderable number against duelling. These were inspired by the Graves-Cilley duel. The records of the investigation of the affair are among the selected House papers. In this duel, fought on February 24, 1838, William Graves, a representative from Kentucky, shot and killed Jonathan Cilley, a representative from Maine. A petition from Portsmouth, N. H., relating to this affair, contains the following expressions: "murder of the late Hon. Mr. Cilley of Maine by the political associate of Daniel Webster, and John Bell of Tennessee"; and, "the murderer of Mr. Cilley, his employer, the infamous Webb, and the United States Bank, which gave the last named person the power to do mischief, are equally

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entitled to our abhorrence." These words are from the native state of both Mr. Webster and Mr. Cilley—a state, also, which is contiguous on either side to the states which they represented in Congress at the time of the duel. One would have to search long among the slavery petitions to find words equal in hysterical virulence to those just quoted. Such a petition is an invaluable balance wheel to any interpretation of the public opinion of that decade on slavery and other great questions.

Like slavery, the tariff has moved the country to pour forth its soul in petitions. Their contents often combine with the tariff, related questions of commerce and industry. In the years preceding the War of 1812–15 the political and military situation in Europe, the embargo and non-intercourse acts, and the tariff appear side by side in the text of many of the memorials. The basis of these petitions is often laid in a statement of facts concerning general economic conditions in a state, a locality, or a city. Sometimes documents or letters containing further statements and facts are filed with the petitions. A few examples of this class of petitions follow.

In 1805 and 1806 the hatters in various states petitioned for better regulation of the Indian fur-trade, which they claimed was conducted in a manner unfair to them. The facts in the petitions and accompanying papers relate to the fur-trade as well as to the hat industry.

About 1803 the printers were seeking to prevent a higher duty on type and to secure a higher tariff on books. At the same time the paper-makers were asking for a higher duty on paper and the removal of that on rags. One of the arguments of the printers against the duty on type was, that it would encourage the importation of foreign books and by thus injuring the native art of printing would strengthen the empire of ignorance and vice in America. With equal sincerity, a higher duty on books is supported by the argument that it would prevent the general importation of foreign books, many of which are trivial or corrupting, and would enable American printers to select and print only the good books among them.

In this same year a cork-cutter of Philadelphia in asking for favorable tariff duties makes the following declaration:

That from the great encrease in the business of bottling Porter, Beer, Ale, Cider & wine in the United States within these few years, your



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petitioner was induced to leave his native Country, dissatisfied with the maxims of Government there, and to come and seek an asylum against despotic principles in this land of freedom where he expected to have his industry protected, well knowing that it must add to the national wealth.

From the years 1817-18 the selected House papers have petitions from various states relating to the iron, paper, umbrella, harness-fixtures, mirror, wood-carving, and gilding industries. A South Carolina petition dated 1822 describes the injury to the lumber industry of that state from the prohibition of trade with the West Indies in British vessels. When the Baltimore & Ohio railroad was building, its projectors petitioned to be allowed to import iron free of duty. This brought a vigorous counter-petition from Philadelphia, in which emphasis is laid on the fact that the railroad had won support by convincing people that its construction would aid the iron industry.

The tariff of 1828—"the tariff of abominations"—in view of the bitterness of the support and opposition which it met, as well as through its relation to South Carolina nullification is one of the most famous of our tariffs. In the years immediately preceding its enactment, tariff petitions are numerous. A larger proportion than usual appears to have been printed. Even a cursory survey of the bundles disclosed petitions from Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia. Some are so elaborate that they rise to the dignity of pamphlet form. Those from South Carolina set forth quite fully the feeling and opinions of its citizens. A by no means inadequate sketch of the public opinion of the whole country on this tariff could be written from the memorials among the selected House papers alone.

Mention of a few miscellaneous petitions will indicate some of the fields in which the less numerous classes of petitions contribute information.

In 1806 the warriors of the Upper and Lower Sanduskies petitioned for a reservation at the rapids of the Lower Sandusky. The signers give their totems and names. Accompanying the memorial are letters concerning these Indians, from General Hull and the Western Missionary Society. Petitions in favor

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of Indian betterment (as from Ohio in 1822) ask for regulation of trade and of whiskey selling, the establishment of schools, etc.

The citizens of western Pennsylvania memorialized Congress in 1807 on the hardships and injustice to which they were subjected by the "unconstitutional" powers of the Federal courts.

In 1814 the New York banks made objection by memorial, on technical banking grounds, to the incorporation of the Bank of the United States. The later history of the bank is represented in the selected House papers by petitions for and against it, and by various other papers.

A poor men's petition from Ohio in 1820, asks amendment of the public land laws. It begins thus: "The poori Mans petetion psalms 41 Blessed is He that Considereth the poore."

In 1836 a petition from mechanics and others of Buffalo was presented, asking for a ten-hour day. The signers state that they are obliged to work twelve to fourteen hours a day, which leaves them no time for rest and mental improvement. In a petition like this, which falls in the beginnings of a great national or world movement, the signatures may be of value in tracing the social genealogy of its early adherents.

Immigration and naturalization are subjects on which Congress has been frequently memorialized. Such documents seem, usually, to be from alien residents and ask for more lenient naturalization laws. Some were more pointedly directed against those who were hostile to all persons of foreign birth. A memorial of the year 1818 marks another type of immigration petition. In it a band of Swiss immigrants asks for a grant of public land. To each signature is added the name of the canton in Switzerland from which the signer came, a fact giving the petition much value from a genealogical and biographical standpoint.

Internal improvements called forth many petitions, especially from the newer parts of the country. Not only do these show local public opinion relative to such projects, but in the course of argument for or against an improvement, they relate many facts concerning local conditions; sometimes these facts are elaborated in accompanying letters, papers, and maps. Of somewhat similar nature are petitions relating to the postal service. When these, together with reports, bills, and laws, concern the



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abandonment or change of old offices and routes, or the establishment of new ones, they furnish material for studies in the shifting and expansion of population.

The section of the selected House papers which is most purely manuscript, and contains papers of greatest individual interest and value, is that of private claims. When a claim is reported on, the formal document is usually printed—in substance at least, and sometimes with accompanying papers; but the latter, which commonly are of greater historical value than the formal claim, are more often left unprinted.

For several generations after the war, claims for Revolutionary pensions and bounty lands were continually being presented. Reuben Colburn of Maine and his heirs kept such a claim before Congress from 1795 to 1832, for furnishing guides, boats, and supplies up the Kennebec River to the Quebec expedition of 1775. The substance of the papers has been printed; but the originals contain further detail of interest. Among them are Washington's orders to Colburn and a list of the guides and carpenters employed. With a claim made by Gen. Moses Hazen in 1804 for loss of British half-pay, is enclosed his commission as lieutenant in the British army, signed in 1761 by Gen. Jeffrey Amherst. Filed with a claim of heirs of Samuel Campbell for remuneration for his losses at the Cherry Valley massacre in November, 1778, are several noteworthy papers. One is a schedule of losses, made by Campbell himself, which would furnish some facts relating to economic conditions among the settlers. Another is a letter from Joseph Brant to a friend, dated July 9, 1778, in which he refers to collecting supplies and rifles, to fighting the cruel rebels, and to having heard that the Cherry Valley people made light of the British party and called them "wild geese." These papers were not printed with the report on the claim.

A claim entered in 1815 by the agent of the crew of the U. S. brig "Syren," for prize money due on captures in the war with Tripoli, is supported by various original papers relating to the operations of the brig. One is a letter by Commodore Preble, written at Gibraltar, September 19, 1803, to the commander of the "Syren", giving him orders and instructions. Mention may be made here of an application for office in 1824 by James L. Cathcart, in which he gives an account of his life

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in the Barbary states after his capture in 1785, and adds some remarks on our relations with those states.

From the first, westward immigration and settlement furnished occasion for thousands of claims, especially claims relating to lands. The papers and information subsidiary to the claims range over a wide field of fact. A claim or petition for recognition of title, made in 1804 by the Company of Military Adventurers, is a case in point. This company was formed in 1763 by men who had served in the colonial wars; it obtained lands in British West Florida and established a settlement in the Mississippi-Yazoo region, but its progress and expansion were interfered with by the Revolutionary War. The briefs, depositions, and other papers filed with the claim furnish an ample body of material on the history of the project.

Of quite different character is the claim of Daniel Pettibone in 1819-20, concerning a disputed patent of a process for welding cast-steel to iron or other steel. The accompanying papers supplement the records of the Patent Office; possibly some of them would be found to be missing from the latter files. There is much evidence in the selected House papers of the readiness with which original papers were in early days sent to Congress from the departments. It is clear that some were promptly returned; but others, still found in the House files, awaken the suspicion that they are originals that never were sent back.

In 1818 a considerable number of slaves were captured by the United States authorities on the vessels "Constitution", "Louisa", and "Merino". The trouble which they caused the government is famous. Aside from the information on the case itself, the papers in the claims for remuneration for care of the captive negroes, made by F. W. Armstrong, John Haines, and Taliaferro Livingston, set down in detail facts relating to the cost of keeping negroes, the value of slave labor, etc.

The claims among the selected House papers that have produced the most striking historical manuscripts, are those for unpaid salaries and expenses of diplomatic agents of the United States. Such is a claim made in 1832 by Michael Hogan, who was consul in Chile during 1821 and several succeeding years. His functions often included our diplomatic affairs, and extended beyond the confines of Chile. The accompanying papers, many of them copies of official correspondence, contain ma-

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terial on political, commercial, and other affairs on the west coast of South America and on our relations and interests there. In one letter, something is said of affairs in Alaska from information gained from a Russian ship bound thither.

Truly remarkable for the wealth of accompanying papers is the claim of the heirs of William Carmichael, which was before Congress in 1840-43. Carmichael was secretary to the American commissioners in Paris in 1776-77; during the years 1778-80 he was a member of the Continental Congress, and from then until 1794 was attached to our embassy at Madrid, first as secretary to Mr. Jay and then as chargé d'affaires. In 1792 he was associated with Mr. Short in the negotiations on the Mississippi question.

In 1777 Carmichael was our immediate representative in the discussions and arrangements concerning Lafayette's entering the American service. Doniol states that this was because he was less known than Silas Deane, hence better suited to ensure the necessary secrecy. The episode finds record in a number of letters filed with the claim; some are by Lafayette and some by his wife, in his name or in her own. One interesting letter is by De Kalb, written on March 14 in English, concerning a call by Carmichael on Lafayette who was then in hiding at Chaillot. It says, "The Marq<sup>s</sup>. does not dare to go out of his lodgings at Chaillos [sic]." Directions are then given for finding the lodgings, with the instruction to ask for the gentleman who rooms on the first floor; the injunction is added, "he must not be named." The accepted story is, that at this time Lafayette was in hiding in De Kalb's house or lodgings. If this be true, the letter just described is curiously impersonal in its detailed instructions. Of later letters by Lafayette, mention may be made of one written in 1785, when Carmichael was in Madrid, relating to the Mississippi question; and of one written in 1788, giving some account of conditions in France. Few if any of these letters are in print.

There are also letters from Silas Deane, Ralph Izard, Robert Morris, Gouverneur Morris, Paul Jones, and others. These are chiefly devoted to American affairs in Europe, during the Revolution and the years following.

From the Spanish period of Carmichael's diplomatic career are equally striking papers. Under date of July 9, 1784, is a

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letter (or autograph copy) from Carmichael to Franklin, which touches on various personal and public matters. There are also several letters from Jefferson; one of these, dated at New York, August 6, 1790, and characteristically clear and efficient, contains general instructions to the embassy at Madrid under our new government. There are also letters from Americans in captivity in Algiers, giving lists of the captives there in 1785. Interesting, also, are some papers relating to routine matters, such as bills for rent, postage, copying, and stationery. A number of letters bear witness to Carmichael's close relations with the Gardoqui family—he was in debt to them in 1787. Under date of October 21, 1785, is a bill of “1151 reals de vellon” for putting up the arms of the United States over the door of Mr. Carmichael's residence. Rather amusing is an autograph note from Florida Blanca to Carmichael, written Sept. 7, 1785. He therein states that Carmichael's landlord has asked his assistance in an alleged dispute concerning house rent, and commends the matter to Carmichael's attention with an expression of confidence that he will settle it with his usual exactness.

It would be possible to continue at far greater length with illustrations from other groups among these papers. Enough, however, has been done, to show the wide range of their possible value. With the collection from the standpoint of the historical relic and of the autograph, these notes have no concern. **From** the bibliographical standpoint, it should be said that scattered through these papers are many broadsides and pamphlets—some are early public documents—many of which are now of exceeding rarity and value.

So far as can be judged from the selected House papers, the destruction of the House records in 1814 is a myth. They certainly make the question an open one for a very interesting study.<sup>4</sup> Curiously enough, the origin of the British admiral's

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<sup>4</sup>This agrees with the report of the clerks in charge of the records, in *Amer. State Papers, Misc.*, ii, p. 245. Their report seems to mean that they first removed “the manuscript records” (i. e., the miscellaneous papers) and then as many of “the most valuable books and [bound or possibly printed] papers” as they could. Their statement that “the most material papers” lost were the current “volumes” of certain committee records, and the originals of the secret journals is further evidence in support of this interpretation.

## House Miscellaneous Papers

orders to his ships in the Potomac to withdraw, is among the selected House papers. It was sent to the ships by an inhabitant of the region, and thence came to a House investigating committee.<sup>5</sup>

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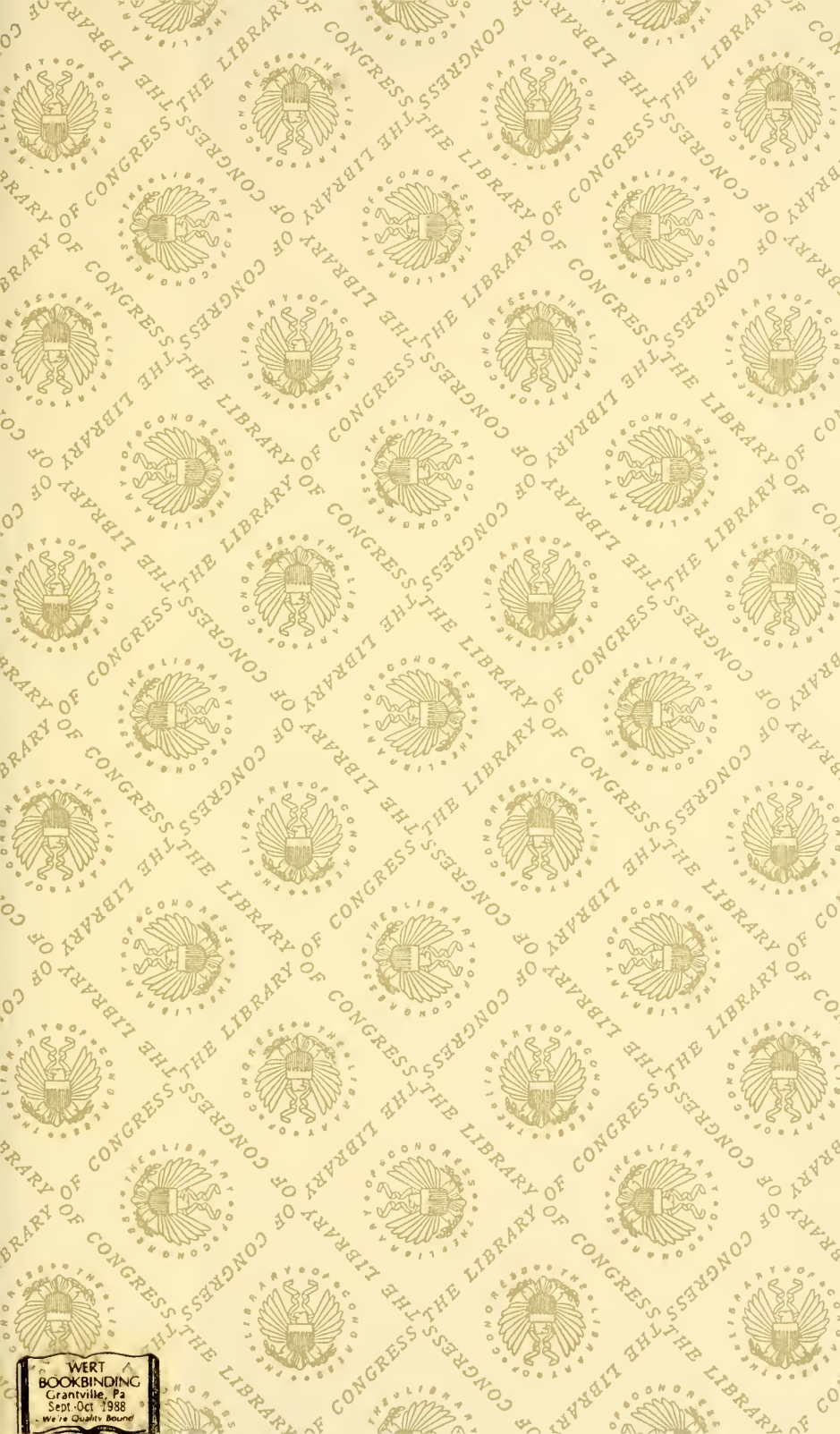
<sup>5</sup> In the report of the Librarian of Congress for 1912, pp. 38, 39 is a complimentary reference to Dr. Tilton's work in the classification, arranging, and cataloging of the House miscellaneous papers described above.—Ed.











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